

AAB PROCEEDINGS

15 November, 1993

Issue 23

The newsletter of the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG), a Traveller club using the official Traveller universe. Produced and distributed by Clayton R. Bush.

Status Report

Last issue, I included discussion of why TNE was not a generic rules set. The other major issues in discussion of TNE before it was released were errata and better support.

Errata

The current errata for TNE is three pages. Most of this is minor stuff and adjustments to vehicle listings. The later will probably change again, since players can now design their own versions with *Fire, Fusion, and Steel*. In all, I have no problem saying that GDW met their goal of avoiding another errata blizzard.

Product Support

I have *Brilliant Lances* and *Player Forms* beside me. *Fire, Fusion, and Steel* is due back from the printers this week, so I'll have it around the Thanksgiving holiday. The list on the last page of AABP 22 is being met.

Contributions

TNE articles are starting to appear in Challenge. GDW would like more. They cannot publish what they don't have, and what they have is a limited number of submissions.

There is a slowdown in any system when a new version is released; the users have to adapt to it. For myself, as the cold winds settle in around my house I am working on several adventure articles.

Three comments to aspiring contributors:

1. A short (4000-word) article will boost your confidence, and prove you can do it. You don't need to submit a trilogy of three 12,000-word adventures. Start with a small step-- but submit something.
2. GDW is interested in Virus adventures right now. It shows in their correspondence. Look at the Hub Worlds (near the Black Curtain), and go to it!
3. Submitting an ASCII text version (3-1/2 disk) together with a printed submission increased the odds of being published by at least ten.

Better Than ASCII?

Some survey responses indicate a desire for better distribution of documents in electronic formats. Everyone uses a different computer or word processing program! How to blend them? This puts HIWG in the same boat as most major corporations, but without their resources.

Bryan and I kept ASCII and WordPerfect versions, because WordPerfect was (is) the most common word processing program. Is there a better solution?

1) Programming companies have been working on this problem. A new format, RTF (Rich Text Format), keeps tab, bold, and italics, but is not common yet.

2) Publishers accept ASCII files, but most do not take anything else. They may always prefer ASCII, because they may disagree with contributor's formatting.

My view: Until publishers accept a "standard" we should stick with ASCII.

Contents

Chairsophont's Letter	2
Computers	2
Alternative Weapons	3
Collected Notes	4
Other Empires	5
Island Clusters	6
K'kree Thoughts	6
Terran Republic Timeline	7
Virus Discussions	8
Dead Worlds	9
Brilliant Lances	10
6-G Limitation	10
Acceleration: Mass & Volume ...	11
Fanzines	12
Antarean Supernova	12

Chairsophont's Letter

--Geo Gelinas

Things are rolling now. The Workshop has had TNE on the shelves for several months. They have followed it up with *Brilliant Lances*, and have several more projects in the works. Some of you are involved in some of those projects. That's good, because supporting and promoting TRAVELLER is what HIWG is all about. To that end, let me ask you, as referees and players, a few questions. After each question, I will share with you my answers.

(1) Have you had a chance to run TRAVELLER, or participate in a game of TRAVELLER during the past 4 months?

-I have had the opportunity to do both. The gaming club in Seattle was running a GDW Demo night earlier this summer, and I spent an interesting evening playing a Vargr. On my side of Puget Sound, I have started a new campaign. (The main reason it is a new campaign is that I have just recently moved to this area.)

(2) What set of TRAVELLER rules were used in that game?

-I have been using the NEW ERA set of rules.

(3) What background was used in that game?

-When I was starting my campaign, I reviewed each of the TNE backgrounds with the players. They chose the Reformation Coalition as a starting place. Working for the RCES, their characters have been exploring the Wilds. However, several of my players like the idea that TNE allows you to design a unique universe, and are working on their own.

(4) What do you like most about TNE?

-The combat system is nice, and compatibility with other GDW

games is good, too. However, since characters are at the heart of the game, I would have to say that I like the character generation system the most. There is still a touch of randomness, so that all characters are not created equal, but the system allows players to pretty much make the character they want. The system is also flexible enough so that if a player wanted to create an itinerant martial arts monk, with a little work, he could.

(5) What do you like least about TNE?

-This is a much more difficult question for me to answer. I would have to say it is the way some of the information for character generation is buried in the text.

(6) What product would you like to see for TNE?

-I am waiting for *Fire, Fusion, and Steel*. I will probably have to buy an extra copy, because I am sure I will wear one out. Beyond that, though, I would like to see a supplement of small arms.

(7) What can HIWG do to help you as a player or referee?

-HIWG has been a source of information and inspiration to me. It has also been a voice for Traveller players to the Workshop.

These are by no means the most correct answers. I do it to encourage you to share your experiences with us. Please send me your answers.

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Yours for Traveller,

Geo

COMPUTERS

Traveller Mailing List

--Guy Garnett

The Traveller Mailing List is a mailbox that automatically resends any electronic mail received to all the recipients of the list. The TML has over 400 members, and is moderated and administered by James Perkins, using facilities provided by the University of Western Ontario. For more information, send internet e-mail to James at traveller-request@engrg.uwo.ca.

The TNE-Pocket list is a sort of special interest sub-group of TML. It is a working group designing a pocket empire for the New Era universe.

Character Generation

Gregory Lee: I have several character spreadsheets which people may find useful. One is really just a printing format for a fill-in-the-blanks character generation template; it helps go through the process a little faster. The other calculates the character's actual asset levels based on the stats and final skill levels. Both are in *Microsoft Works* spreadsheet format (for *Windows*, if that makes a difference). If anyone is interested, give me a shout.

Data Exchanges

--Clay Bush

Letters have arrived from Bryan Borich, HIWG's data coordinator recently; he dropped out of contact for a while. (His

roommate ran up a huge phone bill calling bulletin boards, and Bryan was disconnected. This has just changed, and Bryan is active again.)

Bryan was also involved in getting his fiancée to the U.S.A. from the Phillipines. They are now married, but still straightening out paperwork with the Immigration Service. He hopes to get back into the Traveller dialogue by the end of the year.

Bryan did a wonderful job keeping documents organized electronically, and forwarding copies to other coordinators. I'd like to see him active again. His absence was noticed in a reduced flow of documents between members.

Alternative Weapons

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	-Recoil-			
					Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
AURORAAS Slug	5	5	3-4-Nil	?	15	1	3	40
Buckshot (Close)	5	10	1-Nil					
(Medium) 5x10	2	1-Nil						
10mm G. Sniper-13	3	9	8		5	20	1	3 800
10mm G. Sniper-15	3	10	9		5	20	1	3 800

AURORA ASSAULT SHOTGUN

--Harold D. Hale

This is the "beta" version. Anybody want to play test it?

Terran Marines use the Aurora AS-1 in boarding actions. Though heavy (it is usually carried with a combat sling), it is extremely effective because of its high powered ammo and extremely low recoil. Like the legendary AK-47 assault rifle, it is durable and easy to maintain.

Tech Level: 12

Ammo: 18 mm x 100 mm (comes in 8 pellet and solid shot versions)

Weight (Loaded): 8.54 kgs.

Length: w/stock folded - 79.35 cm

w/stock extended - 99.35 cm

Magazine: 15 (box)

Weapon Price: 1,731 Cr

Loaded Magazine Price: 16 Cr

Special Features: TL 12 Laser Sight (Max Range=240 m). Pistol grip adjacent to trigger guard. Folding Stock.

Additional Info: Muzzle Energy-

4,802/600. Rules for use identical to

H&K Combat Assault Weapon in

"Twilight: 2000." Burst size= 5 rounds.

10mm Gauss Sniper Rifle (Tech Level 13)

--"Sinbad Sam" Thomas

TL: 13

Ammo: 10mmGs

Empty weight: 7.65

Loaded weight: 12.42

Ammo weight: .083

Magazine weight: 4.77

Price (Cr): 17,985

Ammo price (Cr): 849

Features: Recoil Compensation, Gyrostabilization, PRIS Battlesight, Laser Sight, and Bullpup Configuration.

Depleted Uranium Slugs

GGG Stats: 20000], DV=121, RC 7/7

Velocity 694 m/s

10mm Gauss Sniper Rifle (Tech Level 15)

--"Sinbad Sam" Thomas

Ammo: 10mmGs

Empty weight: 7.07

Loaded weight: 12.04

Ammo weight: .083

Magazine weight: 4.94

Price (Cr): 22,474

Magazine price (Cr): 1,050

Features: Recoil Compensation, Gyrostabilization, PRIS Battlesight, Laser Sight, and Bullpup Configuration.

Depleted Uranium Slugs

Using Twilight: 2000 Equipment

-- Chuck Kallenbach

The only problem with using Twilight equipment in TNE is that equivalent weapons in Twilight are almost always *better* in *every way* than the same stuff in TNE. Traveller really needs a weapon supplement fast, so everybody hit the spreadsheets and burn the midnight phosphors when FF&S comes out.

AAB Proceedings

AAB Proceedings is distributed to all active HIWG members. All others may acquire copies at \$2.00 per issue.

Those interested in submitting material send it to: Clayton R. Bush; PO Box 895; Limon, CO 80828. All materials are copyrighted by AUTHOR, and printed for discussion by permission. (N.B. Copyright law protects words, not ideas.)

Acknowledgements

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HIWG Connection

HIWG ("History of the Imperium Working Group") is a fan organization using the official Traveller universe.

For membership information, write to:

Membership Secretary: Clay Bush; P.O. Box 895; Limon, CO 80828. He produces *AAB Proceedings*, which you are reading.

HIWG-Australia: Dave Schneider; 5 East Avenue; Allenby Gardens, S. Australia 5033; Australia. He produces *Starburst*, the *HIWG-Australia* newsletter.

HIWG-UK: C.N. Walker, Bankside, Reddish Road, Marsden, Huddersfield HD7-6NF. He produces *White Noise*, the *HIWG-UK* newsletter.

Computers

IBM PC: Brian Borich, 3890 50th Street; San Diego, CA 92105-3005.

MacIntosh: Rob Prior; 262 Dunforest; Willowdale, Ontario M2N 4J9.

Atari, Amiga: There were groups working on these systems, but the members involved are now inactive.

Collected Notes: Sectors

After skipping an issue due to a space crunch, collected notes reappears. I may split this column to develop categories (or recurring columns) that may improve internal communication. As a start, this month's column is limited to notes on sector development work.

Gvurrdon

--Roger Myhre

It shocked me that Gvurrdon got a large slice in the wilds in *Survival Margin*. I didn't expect that the Virus would hit Gvurrdon that hard. The quarantine that the Regency has put up might make it more difficult to run a Gvurrdon/Regency campaign as I had planned.

I liked the Ozarr design, and would like to see a TNE version when starship construction rules come out. (CRB: Next issue! FF&S will ship in late November.)

I plan to make the Kforuzeng an active part of Gvurrdon. As the "Glass Bond" is broken (or shattered) with Kedzudh, they will aim their efforts at the splintered remains of the Worlds of Rukh.

Rukh will overrun Anti-Rukh. This began in KU #3 and #4. Afterwards, Rukh has problems with internal politics, especially now that it lacks an external threat to unite it. At 1200, the Rukh will have split up into five or six factions and some independant worlds. There may be some fighting among the factions, but not a full-fledged war. Zhodani may move on trailing worlds to protect their interests.

Thirz Empire and the Society of Equals will be at a stalemate. SoE will get some of its worlds back, and some will opt for independence.

I don't plan much change to the UWPs, because I haven't come up with rules for UWP change. I do not believe that anyone will notice what UWPs I do change. There is more to gain by changing the allegiance codes and borders. That is more visual than changes in UWP codes that you never remember anyway.

...

The planned *Vampire Fleet* product borders on my interest in starships. I am

still developing the continuation of *Signal GK* briefly mentioned in AABP#21.

The adventurers in *Signal GK* manage to get hold of a Cymbeline chip (CC). The CC is installed in thier ship. Over the years after the Virus release, the crew members died different deaths. (Maybe some went into low berth with the CC watching over them.) The ship was infected, but the CC overcame the infection. The crew, however, was already dead when the CC won. The CC acquired robots to make necessary maintenance.

By 1200 CC's ship is somewhere in Gvurrdon, trying to find a place to settle down. It may seek a union of worlds it help regain Virus-infected territory. The CC may have a key to disinfect, or at least render the Virus strains harmless. This effect would be something that could lead to Ai computers that aren't driven to kill sophonts or elevate itself as god over them.

Expect a slow birth on this project. If anyone is interested in contributing ideas, send me a letter.

Roger Myhre; Ammerudgrenda 168; Oslo, Norway

Antares

James Maliszewski, a HIWGer, is the first contributor to establish a pocket empire through its appearance in Challenge 71. Congratulations!

Verge

--Penn Eckert

The theme for Verge sector:

Phenharri, a grandchild of the Great Master Droyne Yaskoydray ("Grandfather"), escaped his imprisonment imposed by Yaskoydray. Finding the shattered state of the Imperium, he has started uniting those around him into a growing pocket empire.

When Phanharri returned, he brought with him a city of hybrid Droyne. These are his troops for builind a new civilization from the destroyed human Imperium. He has no problem with human or Droyne

citizens within this pocket empire. He doesn't like or trust the Aslan race, because they were created by another of Yaskoydray's grandchildren as a weapon of war.

The only real problem that Phenharri has encountered is a large vampire fleet that uses a Berserker-type robots to attack all life forms. Destruction of life, at any cost, seems to be its only purpose.

RESPONSE

CRB: First, Yaskoydray killed all of his children and grandchildren. This could be changed for a good enough reason, but... Two, if Phenharri escaped imprisonment, Yaskoydray or his robot minions would be after him. We're looking at TL35 pursuers with disintegrators, anti-matter weapons, white globes, and teleporters. Little the humans can build will help Phenharri against his pursuers.

Developing a local Droyne pocket empire may be easier to get published.

Massilia: Hub Worlds

Hale: "The HubWorlds should be handicapped somehow to ensure they don't become too dominant. The threat of Vampire ship raids was suggested by Dave, but I think he be open to any story that sounds reasonably plausible."

Mikesh: I doubt we need a restraining mechanism for Hub anymore than is needed for any other pocket empire. Why is Japan an economic power and Spain no long is? That's a debate for economics professors -- for the rest of us, it just is. So, if the HubWorlds isn't supposed to grow much, it doesn't have to be explained.

Hub is expanding only where its economically prudent.

However, I believe this is the second time I heard Dave bring up Vampire ships as a special problem for the area. My feeling is that he really would like to see Hub serve as THE setting for virus and vampire encounters. My original intent was for Hub to be a generic pocket empire that ultimately would ally with the Reformation Coalition. Nothing need change this, but I encourage folks to go more with the Vampire ship focus.

Other Empires

Delphi

--Stuart Machin

I am keeping up with my Spartan hegemony project. I have created the UWPs for the empire and its environs, as well as system data and WBH data on the planet itself. I shall send details when I am further along, detailing government, history, key personalities, goals, and future expansion.

Reaver's Deep

--Guy Garnett

The TNE-Pocket list is a working group designing a pocket empire for the New Era universe. Set in the *Aoreijya* region (subsectors J, K, N, and O) of Reavers Deep, we are developing the history, astrography, and culture of the region with an eye toward producing campaign material. *Aoreijya* is an AAslan name meaning "new veldt," and refers to the relatively large number of Kusyu-like worlds in the region. For information about the TNE-Pocket, send internet e-mail to me, wildstar@quark.qrc.com or George Herbert at tne-pocket-request@ocf.berkeley.edu. I am sort of the instigator behind the project, while George administers the mailing list.

Guy Garnett; 14007 Eagle Court; Rockville, MD 20853

Kfan Uzangou

Roger Myhre: My main interest is Vargr, and Gvurrdon sector. I want KU to increase interest in Vargr and Varlr-related topics. To broaden the scope of the 'zine, my adventures are usually not strictly Gvurrdon.

I aim to put out one issue every three or four months. As I have increased the page count, I have to spice it up with more art and articles, which I find difficult to do. Especially art. I'm not a very good artist, so support is welcome. Articles are a bit easier, but it takes time to get a good idea down.

This section deals with projects outside the Imperium universe. As such, these are unofficial variant rules or settings *under fan discussion*.

FULANI SECTOR

--Geo Gelinas

I have taken what I was using as Fulani (the Aquarian Empire) and moved it out of the standard Traveller universe. It is much easier to develop the background when you don't have to have it fit into the Traveller

background. I have also skewed the jump technology some; J-4 is the highest jump, and only the government has J-3 or J-4.

If you have developed an alternate background, I

would be interested in hearing about it. I will be publishing more about Aquaria in future issues of the TIMES.

NEXT DOOR

--Gregory Lee

I intend to adapt the new rules to my own universe. My players have almost all received their character revisions, most with some pleasure. (Instead of using the upgrade system, I walked through a "new character" process, adhering as much as possible to the skill pool the characters had, and making the best use of the basic stats and other information.)

I intend to continue running my PCs in the "Greg Lee Weird Universe Next Door," where there has not (as yet) been a Virus, the Ancients are in a Can, the odd Jedi Knight roams around, lasers still have some punch, and Open Season rules apply to tourists.

HUB WORLDS

--Harold Hale

I currently have a campaign underway in the HubWorlds. We started out with mostly Mega Traveller rules, and I have been phasing in TNE rules each session. Now we are running a pretty much straight TNE game. I have also included the assault shotguns I designed using the Small Arms Design draft.

I am contemplating adding stargates to the campaign. These would be left over from the Ancients, and appear to those that come later as some sort of poorly

understood astronavigation hazard. Only under specific circumstances do they do what they are supposed to... circumstances that the Imperium learned but kept secret... circumstances that a party of adventurers discover by accident.

Another aspect I'm contemplating is psionic time travel. This would be

the ability to observe future (or past) events as though you were actually there. (Think of it as "You Were There," except it's the real people, not actors.) The higher the ability, the farther into the future (or past) you can see. The catch would be that you need a focus for it to work. That focus would be could be an object present at the event (say General Lee's sword at Gettysburg), or being at the spot the event will (or did) take place. Note that you can see the event, not interact with the people or objects there. Sorry, no time paradoxes in my universe...

Gregory Lee: I have something similar (to stargates) in my universe. It works well, so long as they are strictly limited and not in every system.

DUNE SETTING

--Geo Gelinas

Dave MacNeill, a friend of mine, has only recently come back to Traveller, and is excited about the way things are shaping. He is working on a background for his use with Traveller loosely based on the Dune

One (early) HIWG survey response suggests using "TWG" as the name for a SIG developing alternative SF universe settings.

Island Clusters/Reft Development

The Island Clusters subsectors in Reft sector are an obvious area for Regency adventuring. We should develop them.

Hale: That area shows as being frontier on the latest maps, which means that it is probably still controlled by humans. Presumably the Island Clusters would have been one of the first warned about the Virus by Norris and would have taken measures to prevent its spread.

I would love to see someone (and I have considered doing it myself, but too many other projects keep getting in the way) develop the Island Clusters as a "society" (I say that because each world developed pretty much independently). What effect would having jump drive for the last 200+ years have on this region of space? Are they still fighting it out amongst themselves, or are they more or less unified (ala the Solomani Confederation)?

It would be ironic if they were the first one to venture into the old Imperium

instead of the Regency...

CRB: The problem with the Island Clusters being within the frontier zone is the distance from the Domain of Deneb. There is a jump-7 route from O416 to O921, but jump-7 imposes logistical planning on any fleet movement: tankers, refueling drops, etc.

1) The frontier zone shading may mean the area has (periodic?) Quarantine Zone patrols. This would put a few ships in the area, but not enough to control the region.

The Virus variants could be having a wonderful time on the planetary surfaces.

2) The worlds would have had enough ships to mount their own quarantine patrol. (They weren't involved in the Second Civil War.)

This is more likely. Alerted by travellers from Cyril/Reft or Deneb, they are a junior partner of the Quarantine Zone. The Regency was/is happy to support them, because it keeps the Virus farther

away from the Domain.

This would pretty well end any but token Virus presence in the region--if we treat it all as one semi-united alliance.

3) Virus arrived, and had great fun with the TL12-14 ships of the divided Island Clusters navies. There was warning, so not all ships succumbed. The survivors fought off Virus, but at what costs?

There can be devastated worlds and untouched worlds. The area is shown as Frontier, so the surviving worlds have their own quarantine patrol. This would be sort of the ESA version of the Star Vikings: maybe we can sell the supplement in Europe? French, German, and British speaking naval squadrons...

Hale: I say senario 2 is indeed the most likely, followed by senario 3, then 1. (How do you say Star Viking in German?)

K'Kree Thoughts

K'Kree: Virus Survivors?

--Bertil Jonell

There is nothing about how the K'Kree weathered the Virus in TTNE. Going from that they always have preferred planets that are naturally inhabitable, they should have a more or less intact population pool even if their technology took severe blows. A nasty situation might result if they can produce huge numbers of marginally space-worthy ships (say TL8 with TL9 jump drives) that by force of numbers can overwhelm higher-TL opponents.

CRB: The K'kree were probably brought as low as the Imperium. They had to rely on master-slave robots for enclosed work, because of clasutrophobia. This made their technology susceptible to Virus attacks on computing systems. While the K'kree probably survived on most of their planets, they probably will have a harder time rebuilding than humans will.

For game play: the K'kree can easily see

the Collapse as punishment for falling away from their old anti-carnivore religion. The Virus is punishment for not having exterminated humanity. Thus, the Hiver probably have another recontact program going on to coreward to offset K'kree religious fundamentalism.

This could be easily brought into a RCES campaign through either a K'kree ship visiting (to show them multi-culturalism at work) or by visiting K'kree space at Hiver direction (friendly outside contact with humans). Since everyone involved has their hands full with their own space, this interspecies contact would be minor (sporadic, low-level?), but GMs can easily justify Hiver NPCs imposing it.

I have such a K'kree contact adventure on my schedule to write this winter.

Hale: My reaction to the K'kree is... NUKE'EM!!! (probably why I never ran an adventure near their area...too many steaks going to waste...[grin]) I agree with Clay, chances are the K'kree blame the humans

for the destruction of their civilization. This would make being human on a K'kree world like being a Nazi at a Holocaust Survivors Convention.

Flatline: Aren't there several minor human races inside the old K'kree sphere?

Farstar: Offhand, I believe so. Grass eaters all. This does not mean that the Ancients made them herbivores, just that the K'kree did.

Membership Survey

CRB: Only one member survey received to date has used K'kree as NPCs. For comparison, the second least common race, the Hivers, have appeared as NPCs on six responses. Neither of these two races have been used as player characters.

The scarcity of K'kree encounters can be attributed to most campaigns and events occurring in spinward areas or in the Solomani Sphere. The latter is behind the more common appearance of Hiver NPCs.

Terran Republic Timeline

--Harold D. Hale

1117: Solomani forces take the Terran system, as Imperial naval and ground forces, faced by overwhelming numbers, retreat coreward.

1117-30: The Solomani Occupation. A Solomani military governor installed. Due to Terra's proximity to the front, it is decided not to move the Solomani capital to Terra until the military situation is resolved.

1126: Priestess Gabree-el Joahna Darnara ("The Prophetess") predicts the pending doom of the Solomani Confederation, and the destruction that will be visited on Earth. She is later arrested by Solomani military authorities and questioned concerning her prophecy. She is later released.

1130-31: The Virus strikes Terra. Chaos ensues, as the central government collapses. Over a quarter of the population dies within weeks. The LaGrange starport survives largely intact due to the heroic efforts of a team of computer experts from the Hiver colony on the eastern coast of Australia. Computer nets on Mars taken over by Virus strains.

1131-1140: Civil war between various factions on Terra. The conflicts, primarily over scarce resources, result in further death and destruction. Redesertification of the Sahara region begins as Earth's global weather patterns assume their pre-weather control configuration. The Gabreelists (as followers of the Prophetess Gabree-el come to be known) begin winning converts in large numbers in Levant region. The Prophetess establishes residence in Jerusalem, and preaches regularly to the masses. Vampire ship raids begin.

1141-1150: Vampire ship raids reach their peak. Battle of Luna between a large Vampire fleet and remnants of Terran System Defense Forces results in Terran victory. The Prophetess credited with helping to marshal Terran resistance to Vampire fleet attacks. Followers of the Church now can be found on all continents. SolSec resurrected in London by former members.

1151-1160: Construction of the Temple of the Faith begun near the ruins of the al-Aqsa Mosque and the "Wailing Wall" in old Jerusalem. SolSec senior council determines that Gabreelists constitute a threat to "state security," and begin secret campaign of harassment and terrorism against Gabreelist places of worship. "Defenders of the Faith," an order of psionically talented priests, established to defend the Faith from attack. The "Secret Jihad" between the Defenders and SolSec begins.

1161-1170: The Temple of the Faith completed in Jerusalem. Billions of the faithful watch the ceremonies commemorating the event. The "Secret Jihad" ends in a Gabreelist victory, but not before Gabree-el's son Joshua Darnara is assassinated. Hundreds of SolSec agents are publicly executed. The Republic of Terra established uniting all Terran factions under one rule. Terran expedition sent to Prometheus, and several other systems. Gabreelist "Teachers of the Faith" accompany the expeditions and win converts.

1171-1180: Expedition sent to the ruins at Ember to exploit valuable technological relics. Barnard system occupied. "Warriors of the Faith" (actually young Solomani

naval officers nominally under Gabreelist control) depart Terra with TL 12 vessels and conquer Prometheus, Junction, Agidda, Fenris. Proclamation banning AI issued.

1191-1200: Contact made with explorers from Dingir in the Meshan system. Hivers leave the Terran system in an effort to reach Hiver space. Kaguk and Nusku become client states of the Terran Republic. Gabree-el dies of natural causes and is succeeded by her granddaughter Shoshanna ("Young Prophetess") as Priestess of the Faith.

1201- : Terran supported factions begin to gain the upper hand on Lagash. Encounters between starships from Dingir and Terra turn violent. The First Terra-Dingir War (also known as The "Shoshannian Jihad") begins. Fought primarily in the frontier region in and around the Meshan system, it ends inconclusively with a cease-fire. Terran explorers reach Mirabilis and begin missionary work.

Representatives of the Bootean League arrive at Terra to discuss trade, and other issues of mutual concern.

AS ALWAYS GENTLEMEN, YOUR COMMENTS ARE WELCOMED....

Projects

World Tamers

GDW liked Terrance McInnes' draft so much that they have tentatively moved it up to July, 1994. This draft is available as an ASCII computer file for anyone wishing to comment.

TCS Proposals

Two areas are being developed as suitable for a TCS-style campaign.

1. Earth and Dingir are two pocket empires close to each other. As both are hi-pop worlds, sizeable fleets are possible after building programs. Harold Hale is developing the new Terra; Dingir is open; discussions are at an early stage. (Harold

Hale;)

2. War against the Brinn: those anti-social aliens from Corridor's O subsector survived Virus, and have returned to the stars. A tramp free trader brings word of orbital nuclear attacks on surviving human settlements, and one world is pushed to return to the stars sooner than it intended. This would feature encounters between squadrons with a few ships each.

Clay Bush is collapsing subsectors around the Brinn homeworld, and working out a starting chronology. (Clay Bush; PO Box 895; Limon, CO 80828)

Question: which setting appeals more to TCS-style gamers?

Virus Discussions

Vaxalon: Scenario: A late-mutation virus takes over a robotic factory in an isolated system. It builds robots to repair itself with, and kills the resident humans. What have you got?

A berserker, that's what. A self-contained machine intelligence, bent on destroying all life. What do you think? Any problems with the idea? It certainly presents many gaming possibilities.

What if it occurred near the Regency? A terrific adventure could be based on the PC's discovery of the Berserker base, and their star-spanning flight to warn the Regency. Then, the PC's could be involved in the war effort against the berserkers.

Kerry Harrison: Robotic factories, hmm, what about robotic shipyards?

Wonder what effect (if any) the AI Virus had on the TL-17 Sabmiqys robot?

CRB: The factories would still need materials and power. In an empire builder virus took over the factory, but a suicider took out the power supply, nothing would be produced. Likewise for materials; it would engage in the same struggle as humans to recover resources.

You could do an adventure on a Wilds world where expanding robots began scavenging buildings and wrecks for materials, and the humans encountered began to fight them. (I would make the factory a solar powered facility in a desert; the humans would then be coastal inhabitants and sailors.)

Vaxalon: As for the struggle for resources, it would have an advantage over humans in 'reclaiming' computer equipment. It can 'clean out' eggs and viruses more efficiently, and can integrate them into its system better. In the fringes, suiciders may be quite rare, rare enough (possibly) to leave enough resources for the 'berserker' to get a start. It all depends on what you want as a GM.

That scenario you mentioned is probably how I would run it. It allows some heavy combat without the moral considerations of slaughtering humans on a world that's already badly depopulated.

LIBRARIAN

--"Sinbad Sam" Thomas

What about a version of the Virus "Librarian" that goes around collecting and preserving data?

The Librarian strain of the Virus broke away from the creator programming, i.e. not to destroy data, but to preserve data. It uses the same skills techniques as other virii to enter computer systems. It has developed several different methods for extracting data from other Viral strains.

The Librarian Virus has interesting plot ideas, i.e. it cruises around in a large starship and trades knowledge/data for repairing technological items for the people of the planet. It could originate from infecting a very large, extremely high tech computer that was dealing with and extremely large scale library.

Hale: The Librarian Virus (name still cracks me up...I'm a librarian by day) could be a form of Strain 'X' Hobbyist.

TERMINATOR

--"Sinbad Sam" Thomas

What about a version of the Parents Virus that took over a buffered planetoid of 1,000,000+ tons. The majority of the crew is robotic, and there is a robotics factory installed. The Virii that are in control have several different "parents" i.e. one interested in Medical/Biological, another in Engineering/Robotics and finally one that has Computer knowledge. They combine their knowledge and have become what they are now. They have acquired the manufacturing plants to achieve their goals of spreading their lifeform into the virgin areas.

Current research into sneaking "agents" into the Regency. Methods undergoing trials include genetic experiments using humaniti and using cybernetic implants to manage humans and to sneak into the Regency. Many experiments have been done using computer implants on humans with large success. Field trials have been performed on humans implanted with cybernetic devices making them into war machines. Future developments proceed

toward a Terminator-like crossbreed.

The ship has been reported to have raided/plundered many inhabited/uninhabited planets. Unconfirmed reports of humans being taken into captivity.

EVOLUTION

Sam Thomas: The Virii are thinking about 1,000,000+ faster than the human mind. Due to its self mutating qualities, it evolves at a rate of about 1,000,000 years for every real time year. That makes current strains of the Virii the product of 80 million years of selected and directed evolution. The original creator's limitations are not viable over that length of evolution. Remember that it is intelligent. The current strains would not be self destructive, but would be able to learn and change to survive.

Does the story of Pandora's Box mean anything?

Hale: By this point, Viruses should run the gamut of personality types, not unlike humans. The types listed in TNE are just the most common ones.

CRB: The Virus that escaped had been bred for a very low, minimal mutation rate. We are not talking: dinosaurs->birds, mammals->humans here, but shark->shark. The shark has been around, basically unchanged, since before the Age of the Dinosaurs. The Virus developed a half-dozen varieties over 70 human-years.

If your story/adventure can use it, however, then one strain could evolve faster.

Thomas: Survival margin p75: "And once the virus had mastered its new home, all of its offspring that it sent out already new how to defeat these systems as well. With this kind of specialization came an increase in the mutation rate, but more on this later."

p79: "The chance of mutation was increased even more when the virus was moving into unfamiliar system, where cutting a path or closing a circuit could create results much harder for the virus to predict. Such mutations rarely killed the virus, however, as spontaneous mutation

Developing Dead Worlds

often do in organic life."

I believe that I have shown hard proof that the Virii do mutate at an extremely accelerated rate. The Chatterbox chips are the ones with a "very low, minimal mutation rate." I believe that your error is judging the virii in terms of Terran evolution. It is a lifeform unlike any that ever occurred here.

By the quotes above, the Virii number in the hundreds (if not thousands) by 1200. In my campaign the Virii are legion and the Regency is hard pressed to defend its borders.

TNE Virus, the game plot device that has a life of its own!

Vaxalon: The virus has one *huge* factor limiting its growth: food

The virus eats computers. Its earliest forms destroyed them, and modern ones need them to reproduce. There are only so many out there in the wilds, and the number is decreasing steadily. In the TNE campaign as the rulebook presents it, the Regency is trying to decide what to do *now that the virus threat seems to be receding.*

Thomas: About the Virii threat apparently receding: I can think of tactical and strategic reasons for the Virii to do this. For example, what about luring prey while waiting in ambush? The Virii could be withdrawing into bastions of silicon beyond the immediate reach of bioforms intelligences.

I am not trying to convert any "Referees" to my ideas. I am trying to point out that in the light of reason the Virus will not die by its own hand. It will thrive and grow even with its limited "food supply." The Virus should be treated as at least equal to a NPC, but preferably treated a "Intelligent Sophont" with all that goes with it.

WHAT TO DO?

GregoryLee: The Virus is an interesting and dangerous game device. I tend to believe that it need not die out entirely. However, it must show up as a *creative* source of adventure.

--Geo Gelinas

I am interested in developing a set of guidelines for dead worlds. With worlds that still have a population, there is some information on what the world is like, what it is doing, and so forth. With a dead world, all we have is the notation "Ba"

I realize that a referee who intends to run an adventure on a dead world should think out how Virus and the Collapse affected the world, and what destruction occurred. I am looking for a few tables to quickly generate some basic ideas about some of the concerns listed below.

1. Cause of destruction - in most cases, the virus would simply shut down the environment system. However, there are surely many different ways a computer can kill a population living on a hostile world.

Mikesh: My guess is that if there was an easy way for the Virus to kill a population (e.g. open all hatches to the dome), then that's what you're going to see. If it's not so easy, then you'll find examples of every conceivable method of destruction, from nuclear plant overload to the fuzzy logic toaster electrocuting someone.

2. Material condition - what condition would the structures be in after 70 years of neglect? It would depend largely on the cause of destruction compounded with the type of atmosphere. On a vacuum world, there would be very little damage beyond explosions or explosive decompression. On a world with a corrosive atmosphere, a breach in the dome would probably result in severe damage to the insides.

Mikesh: Atmosphere code is a consideration, but also climate and biosphere. Something in the Arizona desert (like our mothballed warplanes) would last a long time, but perhaps not so in a rain forest.

What is the Virus doing that is interesting? Is it living in a pocket and considering its next move? Is it really dead? Or is it merely playing dead, preparing to launch a new and more dangerous attack?

Well, as has been said, it's up to the referee.

On worlds that have to constantly keep in check a riot of indigenous life, after one year, an abandoned abode could be in complete ruins.

3. What was the populations' reaction to the impending doom? Quiet acceptance? Mass suicide? Or utter anarchy? If the population broke into rioting, they may well have significantly increased the damage done to their structures.

Mikesh: World panic and rioting might be the fast track to oblivion. But even if there are no riots when civilization collapses, the prolonged and desperate struggle over resources could possibly result in much more damage.

4. What sort of materials were left behind for salvage. How would the other factors affect what was left. How likely is it that wandering far traders have salvaged a lot of what was there? How easy is it for the characters to salvage what is there?

Mikesh: If the population was killed quickly, then there is probably a lot of usable material left. If the population slowly died off, then they probably used and abused the remaining resources until there was nothing left to keep them going. In the later case, though, there might still be many things of value, i.e. those things that did nothing for their struggle to survive. For instance, a world might have millions of high-definition TVs. Without electricity, almost no one touched them.

As for the effect of traders, a mosquito would have a better chance of killing someone through blood loss. The Imperial population was measured in the trillions. The surviving traders probably could not make a dent in the material left.

The sky reeks of salvageable goods. However, most of it is of medium to low value (TVs and furniture). The best way to handle this is for reclamation companies to buy "claims", then inspect, refurbish and repackage the goods for shipment back to the homeworld. But PCs probably won't be able to handle this type of wholesale reselling very well -- they're the ones to locate the strikes to begin with to sell their claims to the companies.

Brilliant Lances Comments

COMBAT SYSTEM

Myhre: I found it quite easy to learn. There are, however, a few changes from the abstract combat presented in TNE. The game has 30-minute turns and 30,000 km hex scale (just as in TNE), but the ten rounds of fire per turn are gone. We are back to my nightmare: several hours worth of combat. For a house rule, I think I will continue to use 10 firing rounds per turn. Space them evenly with the movement segmentation on the Player Aid Chart; thus the firing conditions will change as you move. To determine if weapons bear on the target, I would use the final facing direction as a basis. Reaction mass for the turn is considered spent for the turn, so a hit to the drive won't change the planned movement for that movement segment.

Clay Bush: I understand your concern about crew wearing out during long battles...but ship crews have fought hours-long battles before. They were exhausted, and I'm sure mistakes were made from fatigue, but ships still fought.

DESIGN REACTIONS

A.FABRO: The new rules seem to be an improvement. I cranked out a trader design in about a half-hour with a calculator, and I'm sure it'll be even faster with Lotus.

My only complaint is that the tables are incomplete. A lot of ship's weaponry seems to have disappeared between MT and these rules. For example, spinal mounted weapons--where are all the other varieties? It doesn't take a Formidable:INT roll to figure out that they'll probably show up in FFS...but, for \$30, I expect the complete rules!

Quick question-- either the rules or I am ambiguous on "one year duration" for power plants. The rules state that the figures are given in "kiloliters of fuel consumed per year per MW output" (page 13). So, for example, a Lord Baltimore-class yacht with a TL-15 456MW output fusion power plant (listed at .1 KL/year) could fly at full power for a year on 45.6KL of fuel? That doesn't seem right...

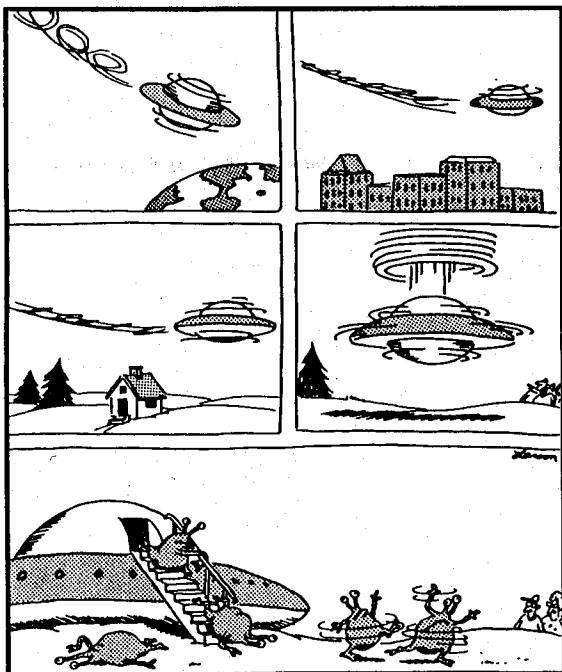
E.SWATSCHEK: It appears only those SM suitable for using in ships suitable for the BL game were included. Fleet actions with 100 000 ton ships is not recommended with these rules.

Yes, that's right. The original fusion power plants of Traveller were *grossly* inefficient. If you could squeeze every Joule out of fusing deuterium, you would only need somewhere in the neighborhood of 200 *grams* of deuterium per year. Fusing hydrogen doesn't give you as much energy (and is harder to do), but it's of the same magnitude.

Why This is so Short

Bush: I received several list of BL design questions, and I have answers for some of the questions. The new Traveller Players Forms product (arriving in U.S. stores now!) includes a ship design form, however, which *probably* answers all those collected questions. I have therefore pulled the questions out of this issue and put other good stuff in. I'll discuss ship design next issue.

(*Fire, Fusion, and Steel* will be out by next issue as well. So please send any design-related questions or answers you want included in the next issue.)



6-G Limitation

One point that has bothered gamers is the limitation to "just" 6-Gs. The Air Force can exceed that now (which is why local gamers keep pointing it out to me here in Colorado! It's that Air Force Academy's influence.)

TNE states that 6G is the limit because of environmental controls, while Mega Traveller did not state why the limit existed. Looking back, I found the following in *High Guard*, on page 17: "Tech level requirements for maneuver drives are imposed to cover the grav plates integral to most ship decks, and which allow high-G maneuvers while interior G-fields remain normal."

How get players to accept this limit for their craft? Marc Miller used to just say, "Because there has to be limits." If in another universe, you may set a higher--or lower--limit *on gravitics*.

The environmental limit can be exceeded today. (TL8's limit is only 1G.) Fighter planes exceed G limits. Passenger planes *and* aircraft carriers do not. Ships do not bolt everything down!

I routinely accept missiles and drones exceeding 6G. I have not yet seen a fighter design featuring 12-G maneuver with 6-G gravitics. If the design had a crash couch and minimal unused space, I would accept it as a valid design.

Acceleration: Mass and Volume

Rob Prior: A major bitch: acceleration should depend on mass, *not* volume!!! This is especially true since we now have (once again) reaction mass instead of 'reactionless thrusters' (whatever they were). Besides the role-playing possibilities, such as tossing cargo (and passengers) out the hatch to lighten ship and outrun pirates, this is also simple Newtonian physics. The basic equation is:

force equals mass times acceleration
GDW: I assume you are aware that we do know about $F=ma$. The issue was how to make the design and movement rules user-friendly. Like you, I was hell-bent on making the final G-rating dependent upon the vessel's mass, but Frank kept correctly pointing out that that could create an awful recursive cycle in ship design. You would have to keep readjusting the size of the drive to allow a certain level of performance following mass increases elsewhere in the design, which would then change the mass, and change the volume remaining for other systems and fuel, which might again change the mass, and so on. This would particularly be the case with tiny little mistakes or oversights done by people who do not have spreadsheets, like us at GDW.

Not necessarily, I reasoned, as there was no reason to not change the design sequence so that maneuver performance came last. But Frank, again correctly, pointed out that most players want ship designs to easily give them the results they want, rather than get the more realistic but less satisfying experience of working for Lockheed and having your craft come out overweight, under-performing, and with the wings falling off.

An example of this is the huge number of players who hate the old Traveller/Mega Traveller dice-based character design system in which characters don't always get the skills they want and sometimes die trying. Although I love the old system, players are much happier with the new system because it allows them to create the character they want the first time out, and not get frustrated by how many tries are

required before they get what they want.

Players will not want to keep designing and re-designing a ship because it doesn't have the performance they specify. When a player wants to build a ship, the first thing he or she visualizes is its performance. And if the design system thwarts the player's wish to build that 6-G Jump 3 hotrod, the player becomes frustrated and disappointed with the game.

While you and I might enjoy the realism of roleplaying a starship designer and sweating the details to squeeze that last bit of performance out of the sixth iteration of a design, for most players this is too

What we tried to do with TNE is to have a system that had the detail of MT but which was more user-friendly.

much of a good thing. At least I have become convinced of that position.

It is interesting that Mega Traveller players are perfectly polarized about the value of the MT ship design sequence: a small group who love it because they were able to figure it out after years of cursing (I maintain that each of these people invented their own version of the system, as there are major gaps that require players to decide how they will fix the problem), and the vast majority who hate it because they were never able to figure it out. What we tried to do with TNE is to have a system that had the detail of MT but which was more user-friendly.

Mass Assumptions

The system we have is based on mass, but in a rather abstract way. The assumption is that the 0.5 MW per ton per G is sufficient to move the amount of mass that is likely to be occupying that displacement ton. This is a fairly broad band, running from about 3 tonnes per ton

to about 20 tonnes per ton, but since the actual thrust has to do with the unspecified speed at which the hydrogen is being kicked out the back, we reason that the heat exchangers can be built for various thrust efficiencies based on the amount of heat they give to the hydrogen, allowing them to apply sufficient thrust across that range of density.

Since players know what their volume will be from the beginning, this notion of thrust based on an acceptable band of density for that volume allows them to specify performance at the outset and know that they will get it. We had a little rule about requiring more thrust if the density is above a certain level, but we did not include it for reasons of complexity. We may add it back in *Fire, Fusion, and Steel*, or in a Challenge article if enough people seem to want it.

There is an additional reason for not basing G performance on mass, which is the fact that fractional Gs are not useful in simple hex-based vector movement. Many of the fine distinctions in precision mass-based calculations, including the differences between unloaded, lightly loaded, and heavily loaded masses would be lost by rounding to the nearest whole number, and in any case would be messy and potentially extremely irritating to be calculating and re-calculating all the time. For the utmost in realism, players would have to remember that the act of burning fuel lightens the ship for each instant of thrust, so that acceleration actually increases each instant as a ship accelerates.

That would require calculus, however, and I don't even want to think about it. I am a firm believer that one of the definitions of "fun" is "no calculus."

So, again, we felt that abstracting mass into volume via a broad band of acceptable densities was the best solution. I hope that this abstraction doesn't bother you too much, and that you will be able to enjoy the game and design a lot of cool ships. I look forward to seeing your creations.

Dave
=END=

Fanzines and Newsletters

--Clay Bush

All publications received are discussed in alphabetical order.

SIGNAL GK 7

40 pages of Traveller fun. 10-page write up of the world of Silk (Dagudashaag 2440), a caste world with advanced geneering technology. Several adventure hooks in sidebars. INDISS news. Hub Worldsbackground(8 pages). Two adventures. Article on trade enhancements, used ships, and Theta Borealis sector.

Insert: Sapphyte subsector map and library data (11 double-sided half-pages)

Insert: UCPs for Al Alrrak intruder & Ue Addzz fighter (both MT designs) (one page)

Insert: UCPs and deckplans for Swift Shuttle & Lance fighter (MT designs) (one 11x17 sheet)

This is the last issue produced by Jae Campbell. Although he will continue to handle distribution, Leighton Piper will edit future issues.

Leighton Piper

11 Skeffington Road
Preston, Lancs. PR1 5UP
United Kingdom

STARBURT 23

HIWG Australia continues to plow steadily ahead. Articles discuss new computer files, current membership list, Yiklerdzanzh development work, and Far Frontiers data. Eight pages.

Traveller Chronicle

Paul Saunders sent me a copy of Traveller Chronicle #1 to review. It compares favorably to Travellers' Digest #1, which gives you its size, its breadth of coverage, and its goal: It wants to become the new Traveller-support magazine. It is published with the permission of GDW.

Articles were good and varied. There two adventures (by Mike Mikesh and Charles Gannon), two rules variant (Martial Arts for MT and Field of Fire for MT starship combat), and a short story.

Production quality is good. The artwork is a bit murky, and a robot listed in the table of contents isn't there. (AABP has done worse, I admit.) Quality needs to rise a bit to match Travellers' Digest, but everything was readable and worth reading.

A fanzine dedicated to Traveller (Classic, Mega, and New Era). Size is 50 pages and it will be published quarterly.

Single issues are \$3.50 and subscriptions are \$12.00 per year. Contact:

Sword of the Knight Publications
2820 Sunset Lane #116
Henderson, KY 42420

White Noise

No recent issues.

ANTAREAN SUPERNOVA

--Clay Bush

There was discussion of having Antares supernova. This was not, however, put into the timeline. It had not done so by 1130. If it did.....

The two visible stars ranked likeliest to supernova are Eta Carinae (jump-600 rimward) and then Antares. (Deneb was considered a possible supernova candidate, but is not now considered likely to supernova.)

Antares is a red giant, and should become a Type II supernova. Whether it has done so in your campaign is up to you!

Supernova shockwaves

Superheated, ejected stellar matter travel at the relatively slow rate of 3% of lightspeed. This also gradually slows. (The Crab Nebula is only 3 parsecs across after 2000 years. *A supernova cannot explain the Black Curtain.*) Shockwave expansion can continue for up to 30,000 years.

The Antarean shockwave would not have affected any systems yet. The nearest candidates could have been hit by a "Great Maghiz" though.

Cosmic Rays

Radiation from supernovas travel at lightspeed. The electro-magnetic pulse effects (similar to the Darrian Maghiz) would burn out any operating system in interplanetary space or in planetary orbit.

The cosmic rays may burn nitrogen in the upper atmosphere of planets: it depends on atmosphere and how strong the cosmic waves are when they hit that

planet. The most recent studies that I have seen indicate the X-rays will not penetrate to the surface of a world with a standard atmosphere.

The visible and ultraviolet light would be severe if close. You would want to stay indoors for about 90 days to avoid the worst sunstroke of your life. You could come out in nighttime (or daytime, depending on when the star shines in your locale.) This heat and visible light is what would hurt the ecosystem.

If Antares did supernova, the Sabmiquis robots are probably still running. They were safely on the planetary surface.

Remnant

Antares would leave a remnant; either a black hole or a pulsar. I'm not sure which.

Vaxalon: From what I've got here about the formation of singularities and the size of Antares, it's not big enough to make a black hole. It would leave a VERY rapidly spinning pulsar (several hundred times per second? Something like that...)

Hale: The Antarean Supernova: The way I see it, such a prediction is like predicting a major earthquake in California. We know it will happen, but geologically (or worse astronomically) speaking, you can be off by centuries and still be "close" in your prediction. It is more likely that Antares has not gone supernova than that it has.

CRB: And remember, Eta Carinae would supernova first. It has not been mentioned in the Traveller timeline--but that works both ways.